

WOLF WATCH

— WEEKLY E-NEWS —

News for the Week of October 15

All School

Let's Go 'Stros!

To show our love for the Houston Astros as they continue their run to the World Series, students are invited to wear Astros shirts with their uniform bottoms on all home game days during the playoffs.

St. Francis Connections: 'Rethinking Our Story About Failure and Why It Matters for Parents'

Can negative experiences foster positive change? Join us on Piney Point Campus for a conversation with **Dr. Becca North**, a researcher, teacher, and author in the field of psychology. During her talk, she will guide us in rethinking our view of failure and reflecting on how that view affects how we live, lead, decide, imagine, innovate, grow, connect, and dare.

In her book, ***Your Hidden Superpowers: How the Whole Truth of Failure Can Change Our Lives***, Dr. North investigates the relationship between failure and success and challenges the prevailing view of failure.

- **RSVP here** to join us for coffee and light bites on **Tuesday, October 24, at 8:30 a.m.** in the Fine Arts Center.
- **Attendees should park in the Ecclesia lot.**
- If you have specific questions about this subject, please **email them to this address**.
- Please note we will not livestream this presentation, but a recording will be available on the Parent Portal.

This Week: Donate Coats to Kitty's Coat Drive

The Kitty Elliott Coat Drive for Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM) starts today and will continue through Sunday, October 22. The annual children's coat drive supports MAM by collecting new and used coats so they are available to those in need before the cold temperatures hit.

During this all-school initiative, we are asking families in all divisions to please donate any new or gently used children's coats in one of the following ways:

- Drop them off at one of the collection bins on Couper Campus between Monday and Friday.
- Donate them at St. Francis Episcopal Church today (Sunday, October 15) or next Sunday, October 22. You may also drop them off at the church office this week during business hours.

A Message From the Senior Chaplain

Do you have a favorite verse or passage of Scripture? Something that has spoken to you or guided you? At St. Francis, we encourage our students to lay up in their hearts the beautiful treasures of the Scriptures. In the days ahead, we will be looking for ways to encourage them to memorize Scripture. To inspire us in this endeavor, in next week's *Wolf Watch*, we will share some of the treasures from Scripture that members of our Leadership Team have laid up in their hearts. In the meantime, I would like to share the verse that is my own personal favorite:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." —Matthew 11:28–30

I love the idea of being yoked together with Christ, learning from his gentleness and humility.

Blessings,

Fr. Bob Wismer
Senior Chaplain

Don't Miss the Next FoFA Meeting

The next Friends of Fine Arts (FoFA) meeting is set for this Friday, October 20, at 8:30 a.m. The meeting will be held in the Advancement Conference Room of the Administration Building (9000 Westheimer Rd.).

Volunteer Opportunity: Annual Ornament Prep on October 25

Volunteers are needed on Wednesday, October 25, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., to help us get materials ready for the annual K–8 Christmas ornament-making project!

- Volunteers will help the art teachers with assembling supplies into kits for each grade level.
- Please meet in the area outside the Fine Arts Center at Piney Point Campus.
- All are welcome to help, for any portion of time that you can!
- [Click here to sign up.](#)

November 8: Volunteers Needed for Art Refresh at PPC

Help us change out the art display on Piney Point Campus! We need several people to help us put up new student artwork in the frames that are in the People Place and outside the Fine Arts Center.

- Please plan to come by anytime between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, November 8.**
- A group of volunteers may also help Middle School advisories make their Christmas ornaments during this time.
- Anyone can join us—no experience needed.
- To sign up to volunteer, please [click here.](#)

Holiday Poinsettias: Limited Number Available—Reserve Yours Now

One way to support the arts at St. Francis is to purchase beautiful red poinsettias grown by The Brookwood Community! [Click here](#) for details and to reserve your poinsettias today.

US, PS, and New Parents: ‘Get to Know the Gala’ Tomorrow Morning

As the St. Francis Gala is a biennial event, some in our community may be unfamiliar with the Gala and its surrounding events. To familiarize Upper and Primary School parents, as well as all new parents, with our Gala traditions, there will be a "Get to Know the Gala" coffee tomorrow—Monday, October 16—at 8:30 a.m. in the Student Life Center on Couper Campus. Please join us after drop-off for an overview of all the fun events offered throughout a Gala year. The 2024 Gala will be held on Saturday, February 24, at the Post Oak Hotel.

Primary School

From the Dean of Academics

One of my favorite things about St. Francis is the way the school develops faculty expertise inside and outside the classroom. I certainly have benefited from this support since I arrived seven years ago. My training is as a historian, which I like to remind my students of on the first day of classes, and St. Francis saw that expertise as an asset in the classroom. Beyond supporting me as a classroom teacher, the school also invested in me through the publication of my book and my presentations at professional conferences.

Of course, I'm far from the only teaching faculty with expertise beyond classroom pedagogy. My colleagues here are technology wizards, award-winning coaches, working artists, and published authors. Those of us fortunate enough to work in this charmed circle can testify to what the Good Book says about iron sharpening iron. We encourage each other to keep finding new ways to learn and share our knowledge. I would never have written my most recent article, "Teaching Context and Perspective With Graphic Novels in the World History Classroom"—my first article focused on teaching techniques—if not for the enthusiastic prods of my friend and colleague Dr. Carol Bedard.

Like me, your students benefit tangibly, producing and achieving more than they imagined they could because they interact with our expert faculty. I asked them if I could share some of their expertise with you, so here is a (small) sampling of the wonderful work they do:

- **Claudia Schoelman**, who teaches Spanish in Primary School, has presented at the Early Childhood Summit for School Literacy & Culture at Rice University. She ran a bilingual educational session in English and Spanish for teachers interested in bringing innovative teaching techniques into Primary classes.
- **Kathryn Willgus**, Upper School English faculty, caught the writing bug in college and has been published in several online literary magazines, including publishing a prose poem called "Mississippi Moves Through Me" in *DUM DUM Zine*. Her passion for education goes beyond the traditional classroom, and she has worked or continues to work with educational technology companies such as CommonLit and Springboard on digital marketing campaigns and content evaluation.
- **Annie Ferguson** teaches Primary I. She has extensive knowledge of mindfulness pedagogy in the classroom, which incorporates a range of techniques used to help students develop emotional control, build self-awareness, and manage brain activity while learning. She is a certified mindfulness instructor both for children—having received training through programs like Growing Up Mindful and The Science of Well-Being—and for young adults, through Koru Mindfulness.
- **Carol Bedard** is a stalwart of reading and writing in the Middle School. She is a well-published researcher in the field of best-practice literacy education who continues to teach college courses from time to time. Her recently published article in the journal *English in Texas*—entitled "Deepening Students' Reading, Responding, and Reflecting on Multicultural Literature: It All Started with *Brown Girl Dreaming*"—is based on research conducted in her classes at St. Francis.
- **Jamie Platt**, or Coach Platt as the students in Lower and Middle School PE know her, has an illustrious career as a women's lacrosse coach. Among her accolades is a Coach of the Year award in 2018. For the past three years, Jamie has been Head Coach of the All-America Lacrosse Southwest Team. Selected for the position by the All-America Lacrosse organization, she runs the most elite and talented team in the Southwestern US region.
- **Bill Black** teaches world and American history in the Upper School, where he brings his wealth of experience as a historian and publisher. A founding editor at an online magazine publishing history articles for general audiences, Bill has also annotated and edited (Presbyterian) church records and written an award-winning article about the American South after the Civil War. His most recent essay, "The Circuit Rider," was

just published in *Acts of Faith: Religion and the American West* (University of New Mexico Press).

- **Kristina Revaz** is the Dance Coordinator for Middle and Upper School. Like her peers in the Fine Arts Department, she is both a teacher and a working artist. She has trained with professional dance studios including City Ballet of Houston, Houston Metropolitan Dance Center, Broadway Dance Center, and more. Recently, Kristina was a guest teacher and speaker for the summer intensives with Ballet Hispánico in New York, and she assisted choreographer Michelle Manzanales with her premier works *Sor Juana* (Ballet Hispánico) and *Hope Is the Thing With Feathers* (Paul Taylor Dance Company).
- Two of our Lower School faculty members were recently honored for their work. In May 2023, Second-Grade Humanities Teacher **Stephen McCormick** and Curriculum & Instruction Specialist (and former Fourth-Grade Math Teacher) **Christine Nguyen** received the Marie Fay Evnochides Fund Award, which recognizes outstanding teachers who encourage excellence through education.

I am so excited to continue the culture of developing and supporting faculty expertise in my new role as Academic Dean. Thank you, as well, for your continued support of our faculty as they strive to be the best they can for our students.

With gratitude,

Jared Staller, PhD
Academic Dean/Upper School History Faculty

Primary School Hearing and Vision Screenings

St. Francis will be offering hearing and vision screenings for **students who turned four years old by September 1, 2023**. Screenings will be provided by Pine Woods Screening Services on **Monday, October 23**. [Click here to read the letter from Pine Woods Screening Services.](#)

Here's what else you need to know:

- State-certified screeners will conduct the screenings during school hours.
- A copy of the results will be provided for school files. Students who have not passed a screening will receive a referral form for follow-up with a physician or specialist.
- Students who wear glasses should bring them to school.
- We do not refer to the screening as a "test." Please help us by doing the same. The teachers will explain the process to our students, and they will discover that they are playing two games with the screeners.
- Screenings are nondiagnostic and are not intended to be an equal alternative to an in-depth exam by a licensed physician or specialist.
- If you have any questions, please contact School Nurse Tamria Matondo, RN, via [email](#) or at 713.458.6167.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, October 16

- *Get to Know the Gala (for PS, US, and New Parents)*: 8:30 a.m. in the Student Life Center on Couper Campus
 - *Open Library*: 3:00 p.m.
-

Tuesday, October 17

- *Chapel*: Primary II parents may attend
 - *Primary II Sings (Owens and Wiener)*
-

Wednesday, October 18

- *Chapel*: Primary I parents may attend
-

Friday, October 20

- *Sporting Clays Classic*: At the Greater Houston Sports Club
-

Monday, October 23

- *Open Library*: 3:00 p.m.
 - *Primary School Hearing and Vision Screening*: For students who turned four years old by September 1, 2023
-

Tuesday, October 24

- *Chapel*: Primary II parents may attend
 - *Primary II Sings (Hughes and Capasso)*
-

Wednesday, October 25

- *Primary School Parent Conference Day:* Student holiday
-

Monday, October 30

- *Open Library:* 3:00 p.m.
-

Tuesday, October 31

- *Students May Wear Halloween Attire (No Costumes, Please)*
 - *Chapel:* Primary II parents may attend
-

Wednesday, November 1

- *Chapel:* Primary I parents may attend
-

Monday, November 6

- *Primary II Students Step Forward to Lower School (Hughes and Capasso):* Students only
 - *Open Library:* 3:00 p.m.
-

Tuesday, November 7

- *Chapel:* Primary II parents may attend
-

Wednesday, November 8

- *Chapel:* Primary I parents may attend
-

Friday, November 10

- *Primary II Students Step Forward to Lower School (Owens and Wiener):* Students only
-

Monday, November 13

- *Pre-Primary Parent Step Forward:* 10:45 a.m.
 - *Pre-Primary Lunch on the Lawn:* 11:00 a.m. at the playscapes
 - *Open Library:* 3:00 p.m.
-

Tuesday, November 14

- *Chapel:* Primary II parents may attend
 - *Primary II Parent Step Forward:* 9:45 a.m. in the Hogan Board Room on Piney Point Campus
 - *Primary II Lunch on the Lawn:* 11:00 a.m. at the large playscape
-

Wednesday, November 15

- *Chapel:* Primary I parents may attend
 - *Primary I Parent Step Forward:* 10:45 a.m.
 - *Primary I Lunch on the Lawn:* 11:00 a.m. at the large playscape
-

Monday, November 20–Friday, November 24

- *Thanksgiving Holiday:* School closed
-

Monday, November 27

- *Open Library:* 3:00 p.m.
-

Tuesday, November 28

- *Chapel:* Primary II parents may attend
-

Wednesday, November 29

- *Chapel:* Primary I parents may attend
-

Monday, December 4

- *Open Library:* 3:00 p.m.
-

Tuesday, December 5

- *Chapel:* Primary II parents may attend
-

Wednesday, December 6

- *Chapel:* Primary I parents may attend
-

Monday, December 11

- *Open Library:* 3:00 p.m.
-

Tuesday, December 12

- *Chapel:* Primary II parents may attend
-

Wednesday, December 13

- *Chapel:* Primary I parents may attend
-

Monday, December 18

- *Primary I Christmas Parties:* 1:30 p.m.
 - *Open Library:* 3:00 p.m.
-

Tuesday, December 19

- *Chapel:* No parents in Chapel—students only
 - *Primary II Nativities and Parties:* Time TBD
-

Wednesday, December 20

- *Chapel:* No parents in Chapel—students only
 - *Pre-Primary Christmas Parties:* 1:45 p.m.
-

Thursday, December 21

- *Early Dismissal at 11:00 a.m.*
 - *No Explore and Extend*
-

Friday, December 22–Friday, January 5

- *Christmas Holiday:* School closed

Lower School

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One of my favorite things about St. Francis is the way the school develops faculty expertise inside and outside the classroom. I certainly have benefited from this support since I arrived

seven years ago. My training is as a historian, which I like to remind my students of on the first day of classes, and St. Francis saw that expertise as an asset in the classroom. Beyond supporting me as a classroom teacher, the school also invested in me through the publication of my book and my presentations at professional conferences.

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With gratitude,

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Lower School Hearing and Vision Screenings

Lower School hearing and vision screenings are **Tuesday, October 24**. Screenings will be provided by Pine Woods Screening Services. This is for **kindergarteners, first graders, third graders, and any new second and fourth graders**. [Click here to read the letter from Pine Woods Screening Services.](#)

Here's what else you need to know:

- State-certified screeners will conduct the screenings during school hours.
- If your child has had any problems we should be aware of, please send a note with him or her.
- A copy of the results will be provided for school files. Students who have not passed a screening will receive a referral form for follow-up with a physician or specialist.
- Students who wear glasses or contacts should bring them to school.

- Screenings are nondiagnostic and are not intended to be an equal alternative to an in-depth exam by a licensed physician or specialist. If you have concerns about your child, do not hesitate to take him or her to your personal physician or specialist for evaluation.
- If you have any questions, please contact School Nurse Fay Gant, RN, via [email](#) or at 713.458.6128.

Reminders About Parent Lunch Sign-ups

Due to space and safety concerns, lunch visitors are subject to important guidelines:

- All lunch visitors must follow established check-in/checkout procedures and will receive a name tag upon arrival, which must be worn at all times while on campus.
- Lunch visitors are asked to follow the dining procedures on pages 30–31 of our Lower School Handbook, as follows: *"Parent/guardian lunches for students in kindergarten through grade 4 will be scheduled from October through April using Veracross. (The link will be sent in September and will also be accessible via the Parent Portal.) Each family will be allotted three lunch dates within the school year. (Note: The lunch count is per family and not per child.) Please be aware that some dates may not be available due to previously scheduled events on campus. The school will limit the number of reservations per day to avoid congestion in the parking lot and within the school building."*
- St. Francis uses Veracross for scheduling family lunch dates to ensure efficient organization of highly attended dates when limited space is available.
- Parents are encouraged to eat with their Lower School child at the tables along Main Street or at outdoor picnic tables in the Courtyard adjacent to the Fine Arts hallway. Students are not allowed to invite their friends to eat with their parents and them.
- **We discourage parents or visitors from bringing fast food or any other commercially prepared food for their child.**

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, October 16

- *Chapel for Grades K–4*
 - 8:20 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary
 - Please be advised that there are limited parking spots in front of the school.
-

Tuesday, October 17

- *Fourth-Grade ERB Testing*
-

Wednesday, October 18

- *Fourth-Grade ERB Testing*
-

Thursday, October 19

- *Fourth-Grade ERB Testing*
 - *Chapel for Grades K–4*
 - 8:20 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary
 - Please be advised that there are limited parking spots in front of the school.
-

Friday, October 20

- *Fourth-Grade ERB Testing*
 - *Sporting Clays Classic: At the Greater Houston Sports Club*
-

Saturday, October 21

- *Lower School Open House: 12:00–2:00 p.m.*
-

Monday, October 23

- *Chapel for Grades K–4*
 - 8:20 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary
 - Please be advised that there are limited parking spots in front of the school.
-

Tuesday, October 24

- *Lower School Hearing and Vision Screenings: For kindergarteners, first graders, third graders, and any new second and fourth graders*
-

Wednesday, October 25

- *Lower School Hearing and Vision Screenings:* For kindergarteners, first graders, third graders, and any new second and fourth graders
-

Thursday, October 26

- *Chapel for Grades K–4*
 - 8:20 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary
 - Please be advised that there are limited parking spots in front of the school.
 - *Lower School Makeup Picture Day:* Only for students who were absent on Picture Day
-

Friday, October 27

- *Lower School Joyful Sounds Field Trip:* 9:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.
-

Monday, October 30

- *Chapel for Grades K–4*
 - 8:20 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary
 - Please be advised that there are limited parking spots in front of the school.
-

Tuesday, October 31

- *Lower School Favorite Book Character Day*
 - *All Saints' Class Parties*
-

Thursday, November 2

- *All Saints' Eucharist Chapel for Grades K–4*
 - 8:20 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary
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Middle School

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With gratitude,

Jared Staller, PhD
Academic Dean/Upper School History Faculty

Middle School Fall Social Is October 27: Theme Is Neon Lights!

All students in grades 5–8 will have their fall social on Friday, October 27, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Couper Campus fields and gym. There will be lots to do, including an inflatable obstacle course; a “toxic meltdown”; and classic games like bowling, ping-pong, board games, card games, and more. Several sports balls will be available for students to play with on the field. We’ll also have food at the event and, of course, music!

Middle School Winter Sports Information

Congratulations to our fall sport teams and coaches on all their hard work on the court, field, and trails this season. We also extend a big thank-you to our parents for all their help and support throughout the fall, and wish our teams who are completing their seasons this coming week the best of luck.

PLEASE TURN IN FALL SPORTS UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT BY OCTOBER 20

Fall sports will conclude this Friday, October 20, with an eighth-grade student vs. teacher volleyball match and an end-of-season team event. Students should turn in all issued uniforms and equipment by this date.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT WINTER SPORTS

Winter sports will **begin on Monday, October 23**, for all students who are not on a school trip.

- **This Season's Options:** Winter offerings are Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Coed Swimming, Wrestling, and Physical Education. Students in grades 6–8 are required either to participate on a team or to enroll in a Middle School Physical Education class each season.
- **Sport-Change Requests:** Students recently completed a survey that reconfirmed or updated their winter sport selection. Sport participation will be finalized after the second day of practice, and sport-change requests will not be accepted after this time. Sport changes will also not be accepted after teams are split.
- **Practice Schedule:** With the exception of Coed Swimming, which will have a modified practice schedule, teams will practice or play every day after school.
- **Forming Teams:** Teams will be split by grade level when possible. If roster numbers do not allow for this, teams will be formed with mixed grade levels, as needed. For sports that have enough students for multiple teams, coaches will split rosters into separate teams after the first few days of practice and evaluations. Students may participate on a basketball or soccer team and swim as a secondary sport if they are interested in doing so and if they are able to meet the practice requirements on their own outside of school.
- **PE Exemption Requests:** Families seeking an exemption for their student from the Physical Education requirement must submit a completed **Physical Education Exemption Request Form** to the Director of Athletics no later than one week prior to the start of the first practice for that season. Late applications will not be accepted for the winter season.

Practice schedules and carpool plans for winter sports will be posted in next week's *Wolf Watch*.

Middle School Hearing and Vision Screenings

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Here's what else you need to know:

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- A copy of the results will be provided for school files. Students who have not passed a screening will receive a referral form for follow-up with a physician or specialist.
- Students who wear glasses or contacts should bring them to school.
- Screenings are nondiagnostic and are not intended to be an equal alternative to an in-depth exam by a licensed physician or specialist. If you have concerns about your child, do not hesitate to take him or her to your personal physician or specialist for evaluation.
- If you have any questions, please contact School Nurse Fay Gant, RN, via [email](#) or at 713.458.6128.

Eighth-Grade Boston Trip: Important Details

The eighth-grade trip to Boston will take place Monday, October 23–Thursday, October 26. [Click here](#) to view the tentative itinerary.

- View information from the Boston Parent Meeting, including [packing suggestions](#), plus [additional information](#) from Grand Classroom.
- View [flight information](#).
- If you have any questions, please [email Marion Tolon](#).

Important Info About OLEs for Grades 5 and 6

Fifth- and sixth-grade students will go to Carolina Creek for their Outdoor Learning Experiences, which are required trips. Students need to wear athletic clothes to school for their OLE trip.

FIFTH-GRADE OLE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20

Fifth graders should arrive to school on Friday, October 20, at 6:45 a.m. and will return the same day around 5:30 p.m.

SIXTH-GRADE OLE: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19–FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20

Sixth graders should arrive to school at 8:45 a.m. on Thursday, October 19, and will return on Friday, October 20, around 3:30 p.m. Medications must be turned in to Coach T the morning of October 19 before your child gets on the bus. [Click here](#) to see the packing list for sixth grade.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, October 16

- *“A” Day*
 - *Dress Uniform*
 - *Middle School Chapel: 9:55 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary*
 - *Eighth-Grade Boys Bible Study: 12:05 p.m. in the MakerSpace*
-

Tuesday, October 17

- *“B” Day*
 - *Regular Uniform*
 - *Seventh-Grade Girls Bible Study: 12:05 p.m. in the MakerSpace*
-

Wednesday, October 18

- *“A” Day*
 - *Regular Uniform*
 - *Seventh-Grade Boys Bible Study: 12:05 p.m. in the Mac Lab*
 - *Eighth-Grade Girls Bible Study: 12:05 p.m. in the MakerSpace*
-

Thursday, October 19

- *“B” Day*
 - *Regular Uniform*
 - *Sixth-Grade OLE Trip: Students should arrive to school at 8:45 a.m.*
 - *Middle School Chapel: 9:55 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary*
-

Friday, October 20

- *“A” Day*
- *Regular Uniform or St. Francis Spirit Shirt and Jeans*
- *Fifth-Grade OLE Trip*
 - *Students should arrive to school at 6:45 a.m.*
 - *Students will return to school around 5:30 p.m. (You will receive a text message when they are 30 minutes away from campus.)*

- *Sixth-Grade OLE Trip Returns Around 3:30 p.m.:* You will receive a text message when they are 30 minutes away from campus.
-

Monday, October 23

- *“B” Day*
 - *Dress Uniform*
 - *Middle School Chapel:* 9:55 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary
 - *Eighth Graders Leave for Boston:* Students must be dropped off on campus at 2:30 a.m.
-

Tuesday, October 24

- *“A” Day*
 - *Regular Uniform*
 - *Hearing and Vision Screening:* Only for fifth and seventh graders and new students
 - *Seventh-Grade Girls Bible Study:* 12:05 p.m. in the MakerSpace
-

Wednesday, October 25

- *“B” Day*
 - *Regular Uniform*
 - *Hearing and Vision Screening:* Only for fifth and seventh graders and new students
 - *Seventh-Grade Boys Bible Study:* 12:05 p.m. in the Mac Lab
-

Thursday, October 26

- *“A” Day*
 - *Regular Uniform*
 - *Middle School Individual Picture Makeup Day:* 8:00–10:00 a.m.
 - *Middle School Chapel:* 9:55 a.m. in the St. Francis Episcopal Church Sanctuary
 - *Sixth-Grade Boys and Girls Bible Study:* 12:30 p.m.; boys and girls meet separately, in either the Mac Lab or the MakerSpace
 - *Eighth Graders Return From Boston:* Students will be picked up at St. Francis
-

Friday, October 27

- “B” Day
- *Regular Uniform or St. Francis Spirit Shirt and Jeans*
- *Middle School Fall Social: 6:30–8:30 p.m. on Couper Campus*

Upper School

From the Dean of Academics

One of my favorite things about St. Francis is the way the school develops faculty expertise inside and outside the classroom. I certainly have benefited from this support since I arrived seven years ago. My training is as a historian, which I like to remind my students of on the first day of classes, and St. Francis saw that expertise as an asset in the classroom. Beyond supporting me as a classroom teacher, the school also invested in me through the publication of my book and my presentations at professional conferences.

Of course, I’m far from the only teaching faculty with expertise beyond classroom pedagogy. My colleagues here are technology wizards, award-winning coaches, working artists, and published authors. Those of us fortunate enough to work in this charmed circle can testify to what the Good Book says about iron sharpening iron. We encourage each other to keep finding new ways to learn and share our knowledge. I would never have written my most recent article, “Teaching Context and Perspective With Graphic Novels in the World History Classroom”—my first article focused on teaching techniques—if not for the enthusiastic prods of my friend and colleague Dr. Carol Bedard.

Like me, your students benefit tangibly, producing and achieving more than they imagined they could because they interact with our expert faculty. I asked them if I could share some of their expertise with you, so here is a (small) sampling of the wonderful work they do:

- **Claudia Schoelman**, who teaches Spanish in Primary School, has presented at the Early Childhood Summit for School Literacy & Culture at Rice University. She ran a bilingual educational session in English and Spanish for teachers interested in bringing innovative teaching techniques into Primary classes.
- **Kathryn Willgus**, Upper School English faculty, caught the writing bug in college and has been published in several online literary magazines, including publishing a prose poem called “Mississippi Moves Through Me” in *DUM DUM Zine*. Her passion for education goes beyond the traditional classroom, and she has worked or continues to work with educational technology companies such as CommonLit and Springboard on digital marketing campaigns and content evaluation.
- **Annie Ferguson** teaches Primary I. She has extensive knowledge of mindfulness pedagogy in the classroom, which incorporates a range of techniques used to help students develop emotional control, build self-awareness, and manage brain activity while learning. She is a certified mindfulness instructor both for children—having

received training through programs like Growing Up Mindful and The Science of Well-Being—and for young adults, through Koru Mindfulness.

- **Carol Bedard** is a stalwart of reading and writing in the Middle School. She is a well-published researcher in the field of best-practice literacy education who continues to teach college courses from time to time. Her recently published article in the journal *English in Texas*—entitled “Deepening Students’ Reading, Responding, and Reflecting on Multicultural Literature: It All Started with *Brown Girl Dreaming*”—is based on research conducted in her classes at St. Francis.
- **Jamie Platt**, or Coach Platt as the students in Lower and Middle School PE know her, has an illustrious career as a women’s lacrosse coach. Among her accolades is a Coach of the Year award in 2018. For the past three years, Jamie has been Head Coach of the All-America Lacrosse Southwest Team. Selected for the position by the All-America Lacrosse organization, she runs the most elite and talented team in the Southwestern US region.
- **Bill Black** teaches world and American history in the Upper School, where he brings his wealth of experience as a historian and publisher. A founding editor at an online magazine publishing history articles for general audiences, Bill has also annotated and edited (Presbyterian) church records and written an award-winning article about the American South after the Civil War. His most recent essay, “The Circuit Rider,” was just published in *Acts of Faith: Religion and the American West* (University of New Mexico Press).
- **Kristina Revaz** is the Dance Coordinator for Middle and Upper School. Like her peers in the Fine Arts Department, she is both a teacher and a working artist. She has trained with professional dance studios including City Ballet of Houston, Houston Metropolitan Dance Center, Broadway Dance Center, and more. Recently, Kristina was a guest teacher and speaker for the summer intensives with Ballet Hispánico in New York, and she assisted choreographer Michelle Manzanales with her premier works *Sor Juana* (Ballet Hispánico) and *Hope Is the Thing With Feathers* (Paul Taylor Dance Company).
- Two of our Lower School faculty members were recently honored for their work. In May 2023, Second-Grade Humanities Teacher **Stephen McCormick** and Curriculum & Instruction Specialist (and former Fourth-Grade Math Teacher) **Christine Nguyen** received the Marie Fay Eynochides Fund Award, which recognizes outstanding teachers who encourage excellence through education.

I am so excited to continue the culture of developing and supporting faculty expertise in my new role as Academic Dean. Thank you, as well, for your continued support of our faculty as they strive to be the best they can for our students.

With gratitude,

Jared Staller, PhD
Academic Dean/Upper School History Faculty

Important Details About This Thursday's Digital PSAT

The official PSAT exam for sophomores and juniors will be held this Thursday, October 19. Important details follow:

- The exam starts exactly at 8:30 a.m. Do not be late.
- The exam ends at 11:00 a.m. (standard testing) or 12:00 p.m. (testing with accommodations).
- Lunch will be provided for students.

HOW TO BE READY ON PSAT DAY

- Restart and update your laptop the night before.
- Bring your laptop charger.
- Bring your calculator.
- Leave your phones and smart watch in your backpack when you get to campus.
- Students may practice for the PSAT on their Bluebook app.

With questions, please [email Director of College Counseling Claudia Mejia](#).

The Social Institute: Cyberback

In the past week, each advisory group ran a specific Social Institute lesson on the topic of Cyberback, exploring ways to support one another and create a more positive school culture in person and online. Please click on your student's grade link below for further information on the curriculum and for resources on how to continue the conversation at home.

- [Ninth Grade](#): Analyzing How the Latest Tech and TikTok Trends Fuel Gratitude
- [Tenth Grade](#): Respecting Others' Boundaries and Helping Others Respect Yours
- [Eleventh Grade](#): Getting Your Thoughts on Cancel Culture—and What That Means for Our School
- [Twelfth Grade](#): Giving and Receiving Constructive Feedback—and How That Differs From Criticism

Hearing and Vision for New Upper School Students

Upper School hearing and vision screenings are **Monday, October 23**. This is for any **NEW** Upper School students. [Click here to read the letter from Pine Woods Screening Services](#).

Here's what else you need to know:

- State-certified screeners will conduct the screenings during school hours.
- If your child has had any problems we should be aware of, please send a note with him or her.
- A copy of the results will be provided for school files. Students who have not passed a screening will receive a referral form for follow-up with a physician or specialist.

- Students who wear glasses or contacts should bring them to school.
- Screenings are nondiagnostic and are not intended to be an equal alternative to an in-depth exam by a licensed physician or specialist. If you have concerns about your child, do not hesitate to take him or her to your personal physician or specialist for evaluation.
- If you have any questions, please contact School Nurse Tamria Matondo, RN, via [email](#) or at 713.458.6167.

College Visits for Juniors and Seniors

Below is a list of colleges visiting St. Francis this week. These meetings with college representatives will take place in the College Center and are for students only. Please note that students must register on Scoir and, if missing class time, need to get a permission slip signed. With questions, please [email Director of College Counseling Claudia Mejia](#).

DATE	TIME	COLLEGES
Monday, October 16	2:30 p.m.	Syracuse University
Tuesday, October 17	10:00 a.m.	St. Edward's University

Now Available! Yard Signs and Car Decals for Lettered Arts and ALL Varsity Sports

St. Francis yard signs and car decals are now available for Music, Art, Theatre, Theatre Tech, Dance, and Cheer, as well as for ALL Varsity sports, from Golf and Baseball to Soccer and Track. One sport is included with your yard sign, and more sports can be added to your yard sign via additional placards.

- [Click here to see sample yard signs and decals.](#)
- [Click here](#) to place your order today!
- Costs are as follows:
 - **Yard Signs (Varsity Sport or Lettered Arts):** \$100
 - **Additional Placards:** \$25
 - **Car Decals for Varsity/JV Sports and Lettered Arts:** \$15
- Orders will be delivered to the Upper School Office Manager in approximately one week. With questions, [email Colleen Dunlap](#).

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, October 16

- *"A" Day*
- *Regular Uniform*

- *Get to Know the Gala (For PS, US, and New Parents):* 8:30 a.m. in the Student Life Center
-

Tuesday, October 17

- *“B” Day*
 - *Dress Uniform*
 - *Individual and Senior Pictures:* 8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. in Crum Gym
-

Wednesday, October 18

- *“A” Day*
 - *Regular Uniform*
 - *Chapel:* 10:00–10:30 a.m. in Crum Gym
-

Thursday, October 19

- *Grade 9 Community Service at the Houston Food Bank*
 - Students arrive to school at 7:45 a.m. and return to campus at 1:00 p.m.
 - Freshmen may wear Spirit Wear.
 - A sack lunch will be provided.
 - *Grades 10 and 11 Take PSAT Test*
 - Testing begins precisely at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 11:00 a.m. (Testing ends at 12:00 p.m. for students with extended time.)
 - Wear the regular uniform.
 - PSAT students will eat on campus.
 - *Grade 12 Community Service at Memorial Park Conservancy*
 - Students arrive to school at 7:20 a.m. and return to campus at 12:30 p.m.
 - Seniors may wear Spirit Wear.
 - Students will have lunch on their own.
-

Friday, October 20

- *“B” Day*
- *SFES Spirit Dress:* Wear a St. Francis Spirit shirt with full-length jeans or uniform bottoms
- *Chapel:* 10:00–10:30 a.m. in Crum Gym

Monday, October 23

- *“A” Day*
- *Regular Uniform*

Tuesday, October 24

- *“B” Day*
- *Regular Uniform*

Wednesday, October 25

- *“A” Day*
- *Regular Uniform*
- *Chapel: 10:00–10:30 a.m. in Crum Gym*

Thursday, October 26

- *“B” Day*
- *Regular Uniform*

Friday, October 27

- *“A” Day*
- *SFES Spirit Dress: Wear a St. Francis Spirit shirt with full-length jeans or uniform bottoms*
- *Chapel: 10:00–10:30 a.m. in Crum Gym*

Church

Outreach Ministries: New Opportunities Now Available!

For additional information about any of the following outreach opportunities, please contact the church's Director of Outreach **Heather Burkhart**.

- **Jeepers Creepers—We Need New Sneakers!** We are collecting new sneakers (sizes 13 youth—7 adult) for the students at Woodview Elementary through October 31. Bring your shoes to St. Francis and place them in the box.
- **The Kitty Elliott Coat Drive:** The annual Kitty Elliott Coat Drive for Memorial Assistance Ministries supports MAM by collecting new and used children's coats so they are available to those in need before the cold temperatures hit. The children's coat drive will take place from Sunday, October 15, through Sunday, October 22. Please bring coat donations on these Sundays or to the church office during that week.
- **Lord of the Streets** needs weekday volunteers between 8:00 a.m. and noon to serve our homeless neighbors. Over 300 hot meals are served daily. St. Francis also collects men's clothes on an ongoing basis—men's shoes are always needed.
- **Memorial Assistance Ministries** has an urgent plea from the pantry team.
- The **Fair Haven Food Pantry** needs volunteers and non-perishable food donations.

Moms' Bible Study Meets Wednesday

- **What:** This fall, the Moms' Bible Study is centering around the First15 app, which lets you connect with God every day and explore different topics through daily devotions that feature Scripture reading, devotional thought, guided prayer, and action steps. During weekly meetings, we gather to discuss the theme of the week, reflect on the Scriptures, and pray. Download First15 for free from the App Store or Google Play.
- **When:** Wednesdays at 8:15 a.m.
- **Where:** Richmond House on the Couper Campus
- **For More Information or to Sign Up:** Contact Allison Devlin via [email](#) or at 713.882.0725.

Join Us Each Sunday for Our Family-Focused Service and Events

- **Sunday Family Worship Service:** 9:00 a.m.
- **Let It Shine Children's Bible Lesson:** On Sundays during the 9:00 a.m. Family Worship Service, join Mrs. Devlin to learn about the Bible as we act out Scripture with costumes and props and pray together.
- **Coffee, Donuts, and Crafts:** Every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. (after the 9:00 a.m. Family Worship Service), get a cup of coffee and enjoy fellowship while young children color, create an art project based on the lesson learned at Let it Shine, and have fun with friends.

Students, Join Us for Weekly Book Studies on Sundays

On Sundays at 10:00 a.m. in the cafeteria, join your friends for weekly meetings to talk about some amazing, Biblically inspired stories. Books will be provided. Please contact [Allison Devlin](#) to sign up.

- **Grades 1–4:** *The Dead Sea Squirrels* by Mike Nawrocki
- **Grades 5–8:** *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis

High School and Adult Volunteer Opportunities: Sign Up Now

This year, we are tracking and giving awards to high school students and adults for completing hours of service at St. Francis Episcopal Church.

- There will be a Gold Wolf Award for completing 50+ service hours, a Silver Rabbit Award for completing 25–49 service hours, and a Bronze Bird for completing 10–24 service hours. Award recipients will be recognized in May on Mother’s Day.
- We need volunteers to help lead weekly book clubs and First Communion Classes, set up crafts and supervise kids on Sundays, and serve at events like Pizza and Bingo Night, the Blessing of the Animals, the Children’s Christmas Party, and much more!
- To sign up, please [click here](#) or scan the QR code below with your mobile phone:



Healing Prayers and Anointings Available

Healing prayers and anointings are always available after Sunday Eucharist services, or you may schedule an appointment with a priest. For more information or to schedule an appointment, email [Sally Jo Flores](#) or call 832.325.2983.

Share Your Prayer Requests Online

Share your prayer requests with us using the “Prayer Requests” link on the [St. Francis Episcopal Church home page](#).

Bible Studies at St. Francis

MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES

- Tuesdays at 7:00–8:00 a.m.
 - **Contact:** [George Hippard](#)
 - **Location:** La Madeleine (1st, 3rd, and 4th Tuesdays of each month)

- Second Tuesday of Each Month at 8:00–9:30 a.m. (**The next meeting is November 14.**)
 - **Meeting:** The Men of St. Francis Breakfast and Bible Study
 - **Study:** The Book of Genesis (Life of Jacob)
 - **Location:** [The Corner Bakery](#) (9311 Katy Fwy.), breakfast included
 - **Contact:** [Sally Jo Flores](#)

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

- Sundays at 10:00–11:00 a.m.
 - **Study:** Nehemiah
 - **Location:** Hogan Board Room
 - **Contact:** [George Hippard](#)

How to Watch Sunday Service Via Livestream

To join St. Francis Episcopal Church's 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. Sunday service via livestream, open an Internet browser on your computer, laptop, or phone. Type in the St. Francis website—sfch.org. Click on the "Watch Live Stream Worship Services" button. Either the 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. service will be available.